

**Connecticut Department of Transportation
State Project No. 142-149
Intersection Improvements on Route 74 and
Route 195 in the Vicinity of the Tolland Green
Town of Tolland
Public Informational Meeting Held in
Conference Room A of the
Hicks Memorial Municipal Center
21 Tolland Green, Tolland, Connecticut
Thursday, December 10, 2015**

Minutes

Presentation:

- ⇒ There were approximately 90 attendees, including Mr. Steven Werbner, Town Manager of the Town of Tolland (Town) as well as members from the Town Planning and Zoning Committee and the Town Council.
- ⇒ A colored plan of the proposed improvements was displayed. The Department of Transportation (Department) presented the Preliminary Design proposal to the attendees, including a detailed explanation of the crash history at this location.
- ⇒ The primary purpose of this project is to calm traffic, reduce congestion, and increase safety. The following improvements are proposed:
 - Reconfigure the intersection of Route 74 and Route 195 as well as Route 74 and Old Stafford Road to create more conventional "T" type intersections.
 - Incorporate traffic calming measures at the project limits to create gateways to the Tolland Green. These features include introducing roadway curvature and splitter islands with landscaping in order to calm traffic.
 - Normalize the intersection of Tolland Green and Route 74 to create a more conventional four-way intersection.
 - Reconfigure the sidewalk arrangement through the corridor to accommodate observed pedestrian patterns and improve pedestrian safety.
- ⇒ Minor drainage and utility impacts are expected.
- ⇒ The estimated cost of the project is \$4.0 million which will be 80% Federal funds and 20% State funds.
- ⇒ Construction is anticipated to begin in spring 2018 based on the availability of funding.
- ⇒ Mr. Mark McMillan of the Department's Office of Environmental Planning outlined the Section 106 processes required due to the impacts to the historic Tolland Green. Since the project location is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the project is subject to scoping in the Environmental Monitor under the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA). The public was informed that the meeting will serve to solicit comments in order to perform the appropriate level of environmental analysis. They were informed that there is a two-week comment period subsequent to the meeting. The project will also require a full section 4(F) document subject to review by the Federal Highway Administration and the Department of the Interior.
- ⇒ Mr. Michael Marzi of the Department's Rights-of-Way unit outlined the right-of-way process for this project. The project involves a sliver acquisition of two properties along Route 74 at the northern project limit as well as a slope easement at the southern project limit.
- ⇒ Mr. Steven Werbner opened the meeting and spoke on behalf of the Town in support of the project.

Public Comments and Questions:

- ⇒ A resident expressed concerns regarding the impact that the proposed splitter islands will have on the yearly Memorial Day parade on Route 74 and Route 195. Other concerns regarding the aesthetics and historical relevance of the proposed splitter islands were discussed. The Department informed the residents that the aesthetic design of the splitter islands will be coordinated with Town officials and stakeholders.
- ⇒ Residents questioned the effectiveness of the proposed splitter islands as a traffic calming device. The Department elaborated that the splitter islands serve to provide a visual break to the roadway for drivers approaching the Tolland Green area. The Department explained that the splitter islands work in conjunction with the roadway curvature to create an effective traffic calming feature prior to the Tolland Green.
- ⇒ A resident suggested that a vote be cast to determine the public opinion of the proposed splitter islands. The vote showed an equal split of those supporting the islands with those opposing them. The underlying concern with the design pertains to the aesthetic treatment of the islands, as well as their historical significance. Residents expressed concerns regarding snow removal and the number of the required signs to delineate the islands.
- ⇒ Mr. Thomas Borden of the Department's Project Development Unit explained that smaller upgrades have already been constructed in an attempt to alleviate the congestion and operation issues along the corridor. These upgrades have included new pavement markings to attempt to reduce the effects of the skew at the intersection of Route 74 and Route 195. These modifications have not produced the desired effects which have led to the initiation of this project.
- ⇒ Suggestions were fielded regarding the traffic operations of the corridor. One resident inquired why traffic signals are not proposed at the intersection of Route 74 and Route 195, as well as the intersection of Old Stafford Road and Route 74. The Department explained that the volumes do not warrant traffic signals at those locations. A suggestion to include a stop sign on Route 74 at its intersection with Tolland Green Road will be investigated by the Department.
- ⇒ A resident expressed concern regarding the intersection of Route 195 and Old Post Road. The sightlines at that location are poor, leading to dangerous turning movements for vehicles. The Department explained that the profile of the road in that location will be modified in a manner to improve sightlines down Old Post Road.
- ⇒ Residents expressed concerns regarding the operations of traffic using the church parking lot as well as the adjacent parking lots. The concern focused on the perception that removing the stop sign on Route 195 will make turning movements from the parking lots difficult. The Department explained that the removal of the stop sign combined with the traffic calming measures may improve the operations of vehicles leaving the subject parking lots.
- ⇒ A resident inquired about alternate traffic calming measures, such as textured pavement or rumble strips. The Department explained that while rumble strips are not a viable traffic calming measure, textured crosswalks can be incorporated into the design to calm traffic and improve pedestrian safety.
- ⇒ Residents expressed concerns that the crash history at this location does not seem to warrant a project. The Department explained that the project was not initiated to solely address the crash

history. The purpose and need of this project is to calm traffic, reduce congestion, and increase safety.

- ⇒ Residents expressed concerns regarding how the proposed configuration of Route 74 and Route 195 will affect the use of Tolland Green Road as a shortcut. The Department explained that by removing the stop sign from Route 195, there will no longer be an advantage to traveling on Tolland Green Road to get to Route 74. The turning movements from Tolland Green Road to Route 74 will be regulated in a manner to improve the operation of the intersection as a whole.
- ⇒ A resident requested that a crosswalk be added on Route 74 to the east of the Tolland Green. The Department stated that a crosswalk is provided at the intersection of Route 74 and Route 195, which presents a safer maneuver for pedestrians than at a mid-block crosswalk. Some residents feel that pedestrians will cross at the eastern location regardless of the presence of a crosswalk and that one should be added to improve safety and visibility. One resident went further to suggest a second stop sign be added at this location. The Department will investigate the impacts a second stop sign would have on vehicular operation.
- ⇒ A resident inquired about the possibility of terminating Tolland Green Road adjacent to Route 74 by creating cul-de-sacs. The Department explained that the businesses and residences along Tolland Green would be too greatly impacted by terminating Tolland Green Road with cul-de-sacs.
- ⇒ Residents requested that the posted speed limit within the project limits be reduced to 25 miles per hour. The Department explained that an application for a speed limit change would need to be filed by the Town through the Office of State Traffic Administration.
- ⇒ The Department explained that the proposed design will not change the designation of the Tolland Green on the National Register of Historic Places.
- ⇒ A resident requested that an exclusive right-turn lane be added on Route 195 South at the intersection of Old Post Road. The Department explained that the volume of right turning vehicles does not warrant a turn lane.
- ⇒ The residents of 79 Tolland Green were opposed to the proposed sidewalk in front of their property. Their concerns centered on the lack of need for a sidewalk in that location, as well as the sidewalk material and snow removal responsibilities. The Department explained that the adjacent property owner would be responsible for snow removal and that the proposed sidewalk will likely be concrete.

Adjournment: In general, the project received a mixture of positive and negative comments. Many residents acknowledge the deficiencies at this location however concerns were raised regarding the location and design of the splitter islands. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 p.m.